

WE CLAIM:

1. A method of receiving a multiple medium message, comprising:

receiving message data from a communications network;
storing the received message data in memory;
retrieving the stored message data; and
communicating the retrieved stored message data to a plurality of output devices.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the plurality of output devices comprise:

a video display; and
an audio output.

3. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

decoding at least a portion of the retrieved stored message for output.

4. The method of claim 3, wherein one of said plurality of output devices comprises:

a video processor;
and wherein said decoding step is performed by said video processor.

5. The method of claim 4, wherein said decoding step is performed by said output devices after said communicating step.

6. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

formatting the received message data, prior to said storing step.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein said receiving step comprises:

enabling an interface to the telecommunications network to place the message data on a local bus;

placing the message data on the local bus into a local memory; and

communicating the message data from the local memory to a computer bus.

8. The method of claim 7, further comprising:

formatting the message data after said placing step; and

replacing the formatted message data into said local memory.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein said retrieving step places said stored message onto a computer bus;

and wherein said communicating step communicates the data from said computer bus to said plurality of output devices.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein said communicating step comprises:

communicating the retrieved message data from the computer bus onto a local bus; and

enabling a plurality of output devices coupled to the local bus to receive the retrieved message data.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein said enabling step is performed in time-multiplexed fashion.

12. The method of claim 10, wherein said receiving step comprises:

enabling an interface to the telecommunications network to place the message data on the local bus;

placing the message data on the local bus into a local memory; and

communicating the message data from the local memory to a computer bus.

13. The method of claim 12, further comprising:
formatting the message data after said placing step; and
replacing the formatted message data into said local memory.

14. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
performing error correction on said received message data.

15. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
prior to receiving said message data, calculating the maximum message length to be stored; and
responsive to receiving a call initiation signal from a remote location, communicating the maximum message length to said remote location.

16. A system for storing a transmitted multiple medium message for later retrieval and playback, comprising:
an interface for connection to a telecommunications network;

a plurality of output devices for displaying a message in a plurality of media;

a communications multiplexer coupled to said interface, coupled to said plurality of output devices, and coupled to a computer bus; and

a memory, coupled to said computer bus;

wherein said communications multiplexer is operable in a store mode to receive information from said interface and communicate

the information to said computer bus for storage in said memory, and is operable in a playback mode to receive information from said computer bus and communicate the information to said plurality of output devices.

17. The system of claim 16, wherein said plurality of output devices comprise:

- a video display device; and
- an audio speaker.

18. The system of claim 16, wherein said communications multiplexer comprises:

- a local bus;
- a CPU coupled to said local bus;
- a telecommunications port coupled to said interface and to said local bus; and
- a buffer coupled between said local bus and said computer bus;

wherein said CPU is programmed to control access of said telecommunications port and said buffer to said local bus in said store mode.

19. The system of claim 18, wherein said communications multiplexer further comprises:

- a plurality of output buffers coupled to said local bus;

wherein said CPU is programmed to control access of said plurality of output buffers to said local bus in said playback mode.

20. The system of claim 19, wherein said CPU comprises:

- a processing unit; and
- a local memory.

21. The system of claim 20, wherein said CPU is also programmed to receive data from said local bus and store the received data in its local memory.

22. The system of claim 19, wherein said CPU is also programmed to process data received from said local bus.

23. The system of claim 18, wherein said CPU is also programmed to control said buffer to effect direct memory access between said local bus and said computer bus.

24. A method of receiving a multiple medium message for later display, comprising:

- receiving message data from a communications network, said message data including a plurality of portions corresponding to different output formats;

- storing the received message data in memory;

- retrieving the stored message data; and

- presenting the retrieved stored message data for receipt by humans.

25. The method of claim 24, wherein the presenting step comprises:

- communicating the retrieved stored message data to a visual display.

26. The method of claim 25, wherein the communicating step comprises:

- communicating the retrieved stored message data to a video processor;

- decoding the retrieved stored message into displayable form; and

- displaying the decoded message on a visual display.

27. The method of claim 24, wherein the presenting step comprises communicating the retrieved stored message to a plurality of output devices.

28. The method of claim 27, wherein the plurality of output devices comprise:

a video display; and
an audio output.

29. The method of claim 27, wherein said retrieving step places said stored message onto a computer bus;

and wherein said communicating step communicates the data from said computer bus to said plurality of output devices.

30. The method of claim 24, further comprising:

prior to receiving said message data, calculating the maximum message length to be stored; and

responsive to receiving a call initiation signal from a remote location, communicating the maximum message length to said remote location.

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